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ART. 22. A NEW RACE OF BLACK HAWK OF THE SPECIES
BUTEOGALLUS ANTHRACINUS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF
HONDURAS

BY ARTHUR C. TWOMEY
Curator of Birds

In Carnegie Museum, the Section of Birds has, since 1947, been conducting a comprehensive survey of the bird life of the Republic of Honduras, and will continue until that country has been adequately covered. This extensive field work has been made possible through the generous and continued support of Dr. Matthew T. Mellon and the Matthew T. Mellon Foundation.

During my preliminary studies of the Honduras collections I have discovered a distinct new race of *Buteogallus anthracinus*, which I propose to name as follows:

Buteogallus anthracinus utilensis, subsp. nov. Utila Crab Hawk.

Type. Carnegie Museum Collection, no. 132,774, adult female; Isla Utila, Bay Islands, Republic of Honduras, April 24, 1948; Arthur C. Twomey, original number 13,190.

Subspecific characters. Similar to *Buteogallus anthracinus anthracinus* (Lichtenstein), but plumage uniformly more fuscous (less black), and the feathers of the lower back, wings, lower breast and belly tipped with pale bone brown. The grayish-white mottling of the bases of the two outermost primaries typical of *B. a. anthracinus* is wholly lacking or partially indicated in *B. a. utilensis*. The inner webs of the outer secondaries are mottled with gray instead of the rufous of *B. a. anthracinus*. The wing and tail appear to average slightly smaller than examples of *B. a. anthracinus* from the mainland.

Measurements (in millimeters):

Buteogallus a. utilensis

Four adult ♂ from Isla Utila: wing 347-374 (364); tail 198-209 (204); tarsus 79-81 (79.8); culmen from cere 27-28 (27.4).

One adult ♀ from Isla Utila: wing 365; tail 206; tarsus 78.5; culmen from cere 30.

Buteogallus a. anthracinus

Four adult ♂ (La Ceiba, Honduras, 3; Castalon, Texas, 1): wing 356-390 (377.5); tail 189-218 (208); tarsus 77-82 (79.2); culmen from cere 26-29 (27.8).

Two adult ♀ (Siguatopeque, Honduras, 1; Manatee Lagoon, British Honduras, 1): wing 378, 381; tail 212, 219; tarsus 75, 79; culmen from cere 27.5, 30.

Discussion. A single adult male, Carnegie Museum no. 132,488, collected March 24, 1948 on Isla Guanaja, shows the general overall fuscous color of *utilensis*, but the tips of the feathers of the back, wings, breast and belly are similar to the more intense black of *anthracinus*. The two outermost primaries are more distinctly mottled with gray on their undersurface, and



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the secondaries more rufous than in *utilensis*. Size is small, as in *utilensis* (wing, 347; tail, 192; tarsus, 79.5; culmen from cere, 27).

This specimen appears to be an intermediate between *B. a. utilensis* and *B. a. anthracinus*, but with its closest affinity toward *utilensis*. This intermediacy would be expected, since Isla Guanaja is the most easterly of the Bay Island group and is closest to the mainland of Honduras.

The new race differs from *B. a. anthracinus* in a direction opposite to that of *B. a. cancrivorus* (Clark) of the southern Caribbean, which it might be expected to approach on geographic grounds. The latter race is more intensely black than *anthracinus*, and has the greatest development of rufous color in the species; *utilensis*, as indicated above, is less intensely black and shows the minimum of rufous. The somewhat brownish appearance of *utilensis* gives it a superficial similarity to *Buteogallus gundlachi* of Cuba and the Isle of Pines, but *gundlachi* differs from all races of *anthracinus* in the great extent of white on the inner webs of the primaries, the two white tail bands, the brownness of the general ground color, and the more powerful heavy tarsus, toes and claws. Even with the limited material that I now have available, I am inclined to agree with Amadon and Eckelberry (1955: 69) that *gundlachi* should be considered a full species.

It is interesting to note that the distinct ecological niches which Dickey and van Rossem (1938: 122-126) ascribed to *B. a. anthracinus* and *B. a. subtilis* (Thayer and Bangs) in El Salvador parallel those of *anthracinus* and *utilensis* in northern Honduras. On Isla Utila *B. a. utilensis* is confined to the mangrove swamps, as is the case with *subtilis* in El Salvador, whereas *anthracinus* in both northern Honduras and El Salvador merely requires the presence of water, so that as long as there are streams, lakes and swamps, the birds are found from the coastal plains up through the humid jungles to the pine barrens and the deep barrancas of the mountain slopes.

This species was very abundant on Isla Utila, where it was seen around the extensive mangrove swamps. On April 17, 1948, several pairs were observed in an aerial courtship performance which consisted of a pair chasing each other all over the sky for 10 to 15 minutes, ending when the pair suddenly came to rest in a tall tree where copulation took place. A nest was discovered the following day in a tree, 50 to 60 feet from the ground, near the edge of the mangrove swamp. The nest, a bulky affair made of sticks, appeared either to be just completed or to contain fresh eggs, for the pair at once began to whistle as I approached and then flew off. As long as I remained near they continued to circle about overhead until we left the area. The hawks were feeding on crabs and iguanas, both of which were very abundant on the island. The natives refer to the birds as "crab hawks" because of this food preference.

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